THE RESPONDER
TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE • JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER
OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM • MARCH 2013

Port of Brownsville Equipment Deployment a Success

On December 12th the Texas General Land Office Region 4 Brownsville office, along with personnel from the U.S. Coast Guard and Port of Brownsville oil terminals, gathered to conduct an oil spill response equipment deployment exercise at the Brownsville turning basin. The purpose of the exercise was to mobilize and test oil spill response equipment from the Region 4 Laguna Atascosa refuge trailer to ensure it was in response-ready condition for deployment during a spill incident in the South Texas Coastal Zone. The equipment inspected and utilized on the day of the exercise included the Region 3 mobile command post, a 23' response boat, three 16' work boats, 1,000' of 18" containment boom, bird hazing cannons, marker buoys and anchoring systems for boom deployment.

Once a safety meeting was completed and the scenario was presented to the attendants at the Command Post, a local discharge cleanup organization (DCO)—Chemical Response and Remediation Contractors—deployed all equipment from the refuge trailer to a designated site in the southeast corner of the turning basin. The on-site participants and observers persevered through the cold and gusty conditions and determined that all equipment housed in the refuge trailer would be ready for deployment during a spill. The deployment exercise also provided the opportunity to discuss and review area GLO Geographic Response Plans and ICS 204 forms with local stakeholders.

Personnel from the GLO, the USCG and the Port of Brownsville oil terminals participated in the equipment deployment exercise at the Brownsville turning basin.

Upon conclusion of the event, all equipment was retrieved by Land Office and DCO personnel for inspection and cleanup. An after action report will be written by the GLO using feedback from those in attendance, addressing areas of concern and documenting successes. The Region 4 office looks forward to additional drills with area facilities and stakeholders in the South Texas Coastal Zone.

The Brownsville Navigation District, USCG Marine Safety Detachment, Port of Brownsville industry representatives and Chemical Response and Remediation Contractors were instrumental in making the event a success.

Marathon Conducts Texas City-Dickinson Exercise

Recently, in an effort to ensure preparedness and competency during an unplanned emergency response to an oil spill, Marathon Petroleum Company conducted a full-scale, worst-case scenario tabletop exercise in Galveston. The exercise scenario included the release of 410,000 bbls of crude oil from an aboveground storage tank and 1,000 bbls of distillate fuel from a pipeline, and included a security component. More than 200 responders from Marathon, the Texas General Land Office, Texas Parks and Wildlife, U.S. Coast Guard, National Weather Service, Galveston County, the City of Texas City and Port of Texas City participated in the exercise.

The collaborative exercise provided each organization an opportunity to practice its role within a spill management team as well as build solid working relationships with each other. This drill also provided an opportunity for specific spill management practices, plans and procedures to be tested and evaluated. The subsequent lessons learned will allow responders to improve not only how they respond to an oil spill, but also improve the tools they use during a response.


Marathon IMT and multiple federal, state and local agencies work together in the Incident Command Post during the drill.


Unified Command briefing at the Marathon Texas City Drill.

EDUCATE ◆ PREVENT ◆ RESPOND

Dispersants Application: Yes or No?

A collision has occurred offshore resulting in the discharge of 50,000 barrels of crude oil from the tank ship *NO NAME*, approximately 100 miles southeast of Galveston. A unified command has been established and spill response resources are being assembled. As with any offshore oil spill event, the unified commanders scramble to establish response objectives for this spill event. Mechanical recovery has been ordered and alternative methods are being considered. The location of the spill, product type, and weather conditions are favorable for dispersant application. We know the spill is located within the Captain of the Port pre-approval zone for dispersant use. Aircraft are being loaded with dispersant, SMART Protocols are being followed and prepared for deployment.

This event has made national news and the media is already questioning the use of dispersants and calling it a "Disaster in the Gulf." Concern is growing over impacts to the local commercial fishery and seafood industry. Local, state and federal officials are voicing their concerns and requesting updates.

Will this event be handled differently than it would have been 10 years ago? Have events from the last few years engendered new expectations? Have we established new procedures for responding to spill events? Has anything changed that could affect our ability to effectively utilize dispersants?

Currently pending guidelines will hopefully soon be established and implemented. Much emphasis has been placed on underwater applications and deepwater discharge preparedness. But what about surface applications—are we prepared to accept that things may not be the same?

The General Land Office is a long-time supporter of dispersants and looks forward to gaining clarity and definitive answers on their use. Dispersants in the Gulf of Mexico have been and continue to be a viable option in response to surface oil spills. We hope decisions on their use will not be held up due to indecision, unrealistic consultations, manufacturing limits or legal issues. What does the future hold for dispersants? The next offshore event could reveal the answer.

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Report oil spills
1-800-832-8224
24 hours

The Responder is published by the Texas General Land Office. Questions and comments may be submitted to Angela Jarvis via email at angela.jarvis@glo.texas.gov or by phone at 281-470-6597.

OSPRA Award Nominations

The call for OSPRA nominations for calendar year 2012 is here!

Every year, the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program honors individuals, organizations and companies that go above and beyond their normal duties regarding oil spill education, prevention and response. Please take a minute to submit an application recognizing those providing outstanding service in the oil spill community in 2012.

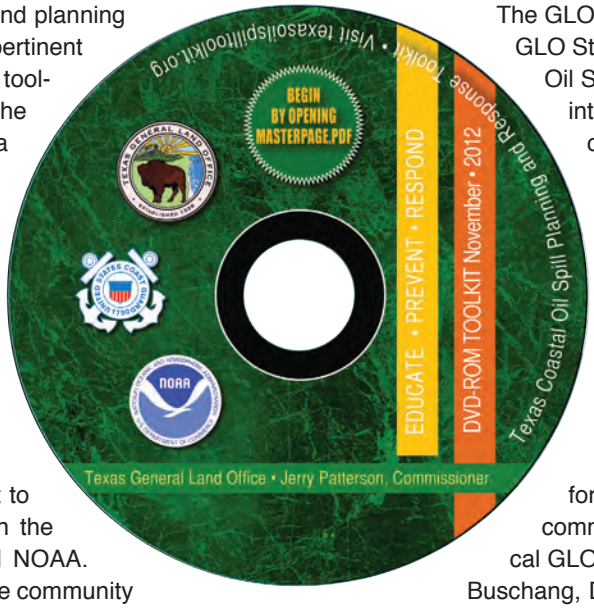
Applications are available via our website at glo.texas.gov or can be mailed directly to you. The deadline for application submission is April 12, 2013.

For more information please contact Debbie Saenz at 512.475.1466 or debbie.saenz@glo.texas.gov

Mustang survival suits were put to the test recently when temperatures hovered around the freezing mark for an extended period. They provided excellent protection from the rain and cold while conducting spill response and boat operations. Safety to the public and all responders is a priority for all spill events.

2012 GLO Oil Spill Toolkit Rollout

The Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program is pleased to announce the rollout of the 2012 Texas Coastal Oil Spill Planning and Response Toolkit. This annual and highly anticipated planning and response resource is designed to provide the spill response and planning community the most current, updated pertinent plans, information and resources. The toolkit strives to be a "one stop shop" for the spill community, containing updated Area Committee Plans (ACPs) within the U.S. Coast Guard District 8; maps covering Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama; Regional Response Team (RRT) Guidance and Documents; ICS Forms (in WORD, EXCEL, PDF, MAC and Spanish); Response Plans; NOAA Job Aids; SCAT Forms; Internet links; Oceanographic and Meteorological Information and much, much more.



The toolkit is a response tool brought to you through a combined effort between the GLO, U.S. Coast Guard District 8 and NOAA. Each year we strive to bring the response community the latest and most updated tools, which this year includes updates to all Area Committee Plans, and new Geographic Response Plans for Sector Houston/Galveston and Sector Corpus Christi. Additionally, the toolkit contains an updated RRT VI member directory, updated Natural Disaster Operational Workgroup (NDOW) documents, forms and links, Sector Houston/Galveston ICS Training recommendations, links to online NOAA nautical charts and more.

The GLO Toolkit also provides a link to the NEW GLO Stormviewer — "STORM" (State of Texas Oil Spill Response Mapping Tool). This new interactive tool displays sensitive biological areas, ESI shoreline morphology, Priority Protection Areas, Geographic Response Plans, links to the Oil Spill Toolkit, EPA Natural Disaster Operational Workgroup, TABS Buoy Gulf of Mexico weather and new tools like the advanced drawing tool. It can also be accessed through http://gisweb.glo.texas.gov/storm/index.html

The 2012 Toolkit is provided on a DVD format free of charge to the spill response community. To order toolkits, contact your local GLO Oil Spill Field Office or contact Steven Buschang, Director of Research and Development and Scientific Support Coordinator, at 512.475.4611 or by email at steve.buschang@glo.texas.gov. You can also access the toolkit online at http://www.texasoilspilltoolkit.org.

Ship-breaking TTX 2013

On January 16, 2013, personnel from the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program's Brownsville office hosted a Shipbreakers Workshop and tabletop exercise. Brownsville has five ship-breaker facilities located within the Port of Brownsville. Various types of ships, including drilling platforms, Maritime Administration and U.S. Navy vessels, as well as barges, are dismantled and the metals recycled. Although extensive prevention practices are in place, the dismantling process has many hazards that have the potential to impact coastal waters.

Among the ship-breakers attending were RM Walsdorf Inc. (DCO), All Star Metals, Bay Bridge Inc., ESCO Marine, International Shipbreaking and Marine Metals. The agencies represented included the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and the Texas General Land Office in Brownsville (GLO). The workshop provided a platform for state and federal agencies to discuss jurisdictional boundaries, response to discharges and notifications, and answer any questions regarding the agencies. Ship-breakers also provided an overview of their operations, spill response procedures and notifications during a response and provided an excellent opportunity for discussion. The agencies explained the utilization and activation of state and federal equipment during a response and answered questions.

In addition, a group exercise was held that required participation and provided input to the scenario. Each of the five ship-breakers discussed multi-response strategies to the incident and notification procedures. Ship-breakers face different levels of response depending on the location of an incident. Overall, this workshop provided an opportunity for shipbreakers and agencies to confirm they're on the same page and understand their responsibilities during a spill response.

Participants of the Ship-breakers Workshop and tabletop exercise, hosted by the GLO Brownsville office, gather for a group photo.

Gonzalo Pena, Region 4 QRO, conducts a presentation during the Ship-breakers Workshop and tabletop exercise.

Eagle Ford Shale and the Victoria Barge Canal

The Congress of the Republic of Texas of 1840, in an effort to increase both safety and efficiency of transportation of goods via the Guadalupe River, passed legislation making private enterprise bear the burden of financing improvements. This legislation led to the development of the Corporation of Victoria, which in 1841, approved a route to circumvent the debris and sandbars that dotted the Guadalupe River. That route later became known as the Victoria Barge Canal (VBC). It wasn't until 1945, when Congress passed The River and Harbor Act that the actual development of the VBC began. In 1953, the first 14-mile portion of the canal opened, allowing for the commercial transportation of goods from the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) to the facility now known as Dow Chemical. By 1968, the VBC was completed to the Port of Victoria south of the City of Victoria, complete with docks and a turning basin. The last improvements to the VBC were completed in 1995 with the deepening and widening of the canal. Today, over 150 years since its inception, the VBC is 125 feet wide and 12 feet deep (as is the GIWW), running from the Port of Victoria to the GIWW in San Antonio Bay, some 34.9 miles. Prior to 2011, the VBC handled mostly petrochemicals from Ineos, Inoevene, Dow and Seadrift Coke. The Port of Victoria, the terminus of the VBC, also included gravel and fertilizer facilities, loading approximately 121 barges per month. The only oil transfer consisted of one 22,500-barrel barge per month, at Seadrift Coke.

When the Eagle Ford Shale was discovered in the Cuero area in 2011, it dramatically changed the usage of the VBC. The area containing the shale formation had limited infrastructure for crude oil movement, with no available pipelines to carry product for transfer to refineries. Crude oil transport was accomplished via transport truck only. The nearest major port or transportation hub was Corpus Christi, some 100 miles away. This led to renewed interest in the Victoria Barge Canal, with its link to the GIWW, and only 28 miles from the Cuero area. By December 2011, the average crude oil movement had risen from a monthly average of one barge of 22,500 barrels to approximately 34 same-size barges per month, or 765,000 barrels of petroleum product per month. It takes approximately 140 tank trucks with a capacity of 170-barrels of product to fill one barge. At least 4,700 transport trucks offload at the Port of Victoria each month, mostly offloading into barges. Two new oil storage facilities are currently being built on Port of Victoria property, allowing a total of 280,000 barrels of storage.

The Port of Victoria has several projects ongoing or under consideration to develop port property south of the turning basin in

The Victoria Barge Canal.

an effort to provide larger cargo handling space and possibly reduce the current congestion. This development would allow more crude oil handling facilities to enter the VBC and Port of Victoria. Consequently, the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program Region 5 Port Lavaca field office, has increased its boat and vehicle patrols tenfold in the VBC/Port of Victoria area. Of the new facilities transporting Eagle Ford Shale hydrocarbons, only one has experience transferring oil on coastal waterways. Texas Flow Transportation, Gavilon and GeoSouthern are inland oil and gas operators that are new to maritime transportation issues. As a result of these new transporters, concerns have been raised that the increased transportation of petroleum products could adversely affect the bird and animal populations in the San Antonio Bay area if a spill occurs. This area is home to many threatened and endangered species, including the whooping crane, as well as many businesses devoted to commercial and recreational fishing and hunting. Region 5 staff members have been deeply involved with these operators helping them develop and maintain a high degree of spill response capability, and educating them on compliance with the Texas Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act of 1991.

The Port of Victoria and the Victoria Barge Canal are important economic transportation hubs for the Eagle Ford Shale formation petroleum play. These entities, along with all transporters and regulators, are working hard to strike a balance for the common good, maintaining an equal balance between the economy and the protection of coastal natural resources so both can prosper and benefit.

The Natural Disaster Operational Workgroup (NDOW) received a 2011 OSPRA Award. The group includes personnel from the TCEQ, GLO, TPWD, EPA and the USCG.

Seaway Crude Pipeline, operated by Enterprise Crude Pipeline, received a 2011 OSPRA Award.